

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-05 LAB-01

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7274

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2861

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ELAB, CZ, UK

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK-BRITISH VISIT: THE SEMBLANCE IS THE
SUBSTANCE

1. SUMMARY: LATE NOVEMBER IS WITNESSING FLURRY OF
ACTIVITY IN BRITISH-CZECHOSLOVAK CONTACTS, WITH TUC DELE-
GATION VISIT TO PRAGUE AND CSSR PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION
VISIT TO LONDON. DESPITE LACK OF SUBSTANCE, CZECHOSLOVAKS
SEEM MORE THAN PLEASED AT OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR
ACCEPTABILITY ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE. END SUMMARY.

2. FIVE-MAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS (TUC) DELEGATION, HEADED
BY SECRETARY GENERAL LEN MURRY, VISITED PRAGUE LAST WEEK
FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH CENTRAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL (URO).
DELEGATION, WHICH ARRIVED WEDNESDAY MORNING AND LEFT FRIDAY
AFTERNOON, HAD PREVIOUSLY SPENT FIVE DAYS IN BUDAPEST. TUC
VISIT RECEIVED FRONT PAGE PRESS TREATMENT, AND CZECHOSLOVAKS
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PULLED OUT ALL PROTOCOL STOPS, INCLUDING MEETING WITH HUSAK.

EVEN MURRAY'S LATE ARRIVAL (HE HAD FLOWN FROM BUDAPEST BACK TO LONDON, AND DID NOT ACTUALLY ARRIVE IN PRAGUE UNTIL 5:00 P.M. THURSDAY, WHICH GAVE HIM LESS THAN 24 HOURS HERE) DID NOT DAMPEN ENTHUSIASM OF HOSTS. URO CHAIRMAN AND PARTY PRESIDUM MEMBER KAREL HOFFMAN GREETED MURRAY AT AIRPORT, HAVING WAITED FOR HOUR AND A HALF IN VIP LOUNGE DUE TO DELAY IN ARRIVAL OF MURRAY'S FLIGHT. HOFFMAN ALSO ATTENDED A DINNER AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY, SURELY FIRST PRESIDUM MEMBER TO HAVE DONE SO IN LIVING MEMORY. ACCORDING TO BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICIAL, HOFFMAN'S AFTER DINNER REMARKS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AND THAT HE WAS NOT AT DINNER IN HIS PARTY CAPACITY; HE WAS MERELY TRADE UNIONIST. HE APPARENTLY OVER-STRESSED THIS POINT TO EXTENT THAT HIS FOREIGN MINISTER INTERPRETER FELT CONSTRAINED TO TRANSLATE AT LEAST ONE REFERENCE TO RELATIONS BETWEEN "THE WORKERS" OF UK AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. THIS IS FIRST TUC DELEGATION TO VISIT CZECHOSLOVAKIA SINCE SOVIET INVASION IN AUGUST 1968. INVITATIONS TO CZECH-OSLOVAK UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND THOSE OF WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN INVASION TO ATTEND 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF FOUNDING OF TUC IN SEPTEMBER 1968 WERE SUMMARILY CANCELLED. TUC BEGAN TO REVIVE THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN CONTACTS IN 1972-72 AND VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOULD SEEM TO COMPLETE THIS TASK.

3. BRITISH EMBASSY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL DISUCSSIONS. HOWEVER, FROM RATHER BLAND COMMUNIQUE (REFERENCES TO CUBA AND CHILE EXCISED AT TUC INSISTENCE), AND FROM CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF TUC DELEGATION AND BRITISH EMBASSY, IT APPEARS THAT NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE WAS DISCUSSED. THUS ONLY SIGNIFICANCE OF VISIT LIES IN FACT THAT TI TOOK PLACE AT ALL.

4. ON NOVEMBER 20TH, FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF CZECHOSLOVAK FEDERAL ASSEMBLY AND PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER JAN MARKO WILL LEAD A SEVEN-MAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION ON A VISIT TO UK. ALTHOUGH VISIT PRIMARILY AN IPU AFFAIR, MARKO WILL FOR TWO DAYS BE GUEST OF HMG. ONCE AGAIN, IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT ANY MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE WILL BE DISCUSSED.

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5. IN HIGHLY VITUPERATIVE ARTICLE IN NOVEMBER 12TH EDITION OF LONDON TIMES, BERNARD LEVIN STRONGLY ATTACKED MARKO VISIT AND PROSPECTIVE VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK. LEVIN PIECE CHARACTERIZED BY NUMEROUS VITRIOLIC COMMENTS ON BOTH MARKO AND CHNOUPEK PERSONALLY. BRITISH EMBASSY SOURCES STATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO OFICIAL REACTION EITHER FROM CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY IN LONDON OR FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY HERE, ALTHOUGH SIXTH DEPARTMENT (NORTH AMERICA AND GREAT

BRITAAN) HEAD ZANTOVSKY DID DISCUSS ARTICLE WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR "MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER." WHETHER BECAUSE OF OR IN SPITE OF LEVIN ARTICLE, PRIME MINSITER WILSON HAS NOW DECIDED TO RECEIVE MARKO DURING VISIT.

6. COMMENT: BOTH ABOVE MENTIONED VISITS ARE TYPICAL OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S CONTINUING SEARCH FOR LEGITIMACY AND AN END TO HER STATUS AS PARIAS OF EUROPE. SHE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY NEGOTIATING ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WITH US, FRG AND AUSTRIA. IN ABSENCE OF SUCH SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, HOWEVER, CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE NEVERTHELESS CONTENT, EVEN EAGER, TO LET FACTS OF VISITS AND INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS CONSTITUTE ESSENCE OF THEIR FOREIGN POLICY AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO PORTRAY MARKO VISIT AS THEY DID THOSE OF TUC DELEGATION AND OF EDGAR FAURE IN JULY, AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S ACCEPTABILITY AND ACTIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL SPHERE.
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